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MASSACHUSETTS WOMAN SENTENCED FOR IDENTITY THEFT CHARGES

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – Marie Colokathis, of 11 Russell Terrace, Newburyport, Massachusetts, was sentenced yesterday in U.S. District Court in Concord by Chief Judge Steven J. McAuliffe to 36 months in federal prison and a \$20,000.00 fine following her conviction on a four-count indictment for identity theft crimes. In January 2006, a jury convicted Colokathis of federal wire fraud, credit card fraud, conspiracy, and aggravated identity theft charges after a three day trial.

On September 28, 2005, a federal grand jury returned a superceding indictment charging that between December 1999 and October of 2004, Colokathis, aided and abetted by a co-defendant, Kelly Marino, committed wire fraud, credit card fraud, conspiracy, and aggravated identity theft in an ongoing scheme. The identity information, and especially the social security number of another Massachusetts woman, was used to fraudulently obtain energy services and credit cards which in turn were used on shopping sprees, some of which took place in New Hampshire. Colokathis obtained the victim's identity information when her co-defendant, Marino, found the victim's driver's license in a parking lot. The jury convicted Colokathis of all four charges in the indictment.

The prosecution of Colokathis resulted from the formation of the Identity Theft and Fraud Working Group organized in the U.S. Attorney's office, which brings together both federal and state law enforcement agencies to combat identity theft and fraud. An intensive and coordinated investigation by agents of the Newburyport, Massachusetts Police Department and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service resulted in Colokathis's apprehension.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono commended all agencies involved stating, "The vigilance of the Newburyport Massachusetts Police Department, which first began investigation of the fraud, followed by the joint efforts and outstanding cooperation among federal and state agencies stands as a fine example of law enforcement work and professionalism at its best. This case should serve as a warning to anyone contemplating identity fraud that they will be detected, apprehended, and prosecuted."

Assistant U. S. Attorney Alfred Rubega prosecuted this case..